

Indiana Youth Smoking



Tobacco Prevention
and Cessation

June 2023

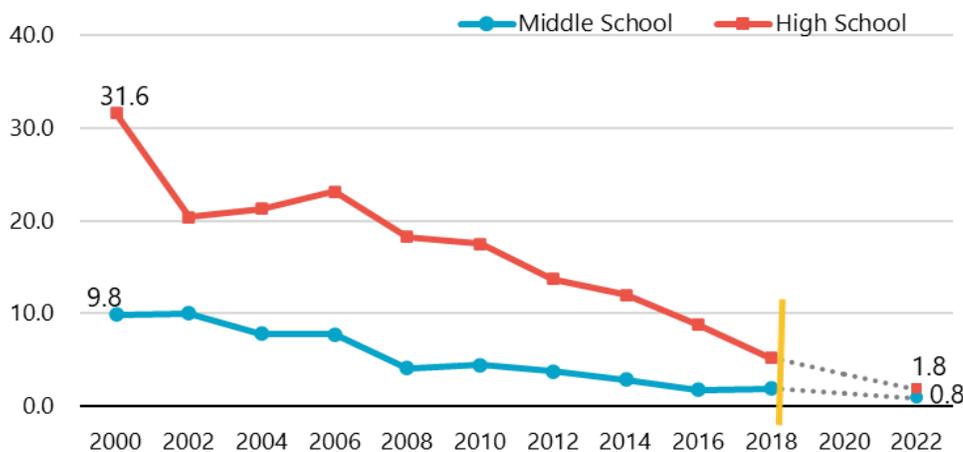
Preventing tobacco companies from aggressively marketing their products to youth should be a priority for everyone. Early use of cigarettes or other combustible tobacco products including cigars, cigarillos, pipe or hookah has been shown to lead to nicotine addiction. About half of adults who smoke report starting before the age of 18. In the US more than 1,100 youth under the age of 18 try smoking for the first time each day.

Indiana has made substantial progress with youth cigarette smoking

Smoking rates among Indiana youth in 2022 were the lowest they have ever been. Fewer than 2% of Indiana high school students reported currently smoking (past 30 days). Even fewer Indiana middle school youth reported smoking (0.8%) Cigarette smoking among youth nationally has also declined.

In 2022, youth nationally reported similar rates of smoking compared to Indiana. Current cigarette smoking dropped to 1.0% among middle school students nationally compared to 0.8% among Indiana youth. Additionally, cigarette smoking decreased to 2.0% among high school students nationally compared to 1.8% among Indiana youth.

Smoking Among Indiana High School and Middle School Youth, IYTS 2000-2022



Changes in Smoking Behaviors

In addition to declines in smoking prevalence overall, fewer youth are reporting behaviors that indicate regular, established smoking.

- The percentage of Indiana high school students who frequently smoke (use in 20 of the past 30 days) **decreased by 45% between 2000 and 2022**, from 54.3% to 29.7%.

Fast Facts

- 1.8%** of Hoosier high school students and **0.8%** of Hoosier middle school students reported current smoking in 2022.
- 46%** of Hoosier high school students who smoke, usually use menthol cigarettes.
- Middle school youth in Indiana are smoking at similar rates compared to youth nationally. 0.8% vs. 1.0%
- High School youth in Indiana are smoking at similar rates compared to youth nationally. 1.8% vs. 2.0%
- Youth who do smoke are smoking less frequently and smoking fewer cigarettes.

Menthol Cigarettes

While cigarette use continues to decline among youth in Indiana and across the US, menthol cigarettes continue to be popular. Menthol is a minty taste and aroma that is widely used in consumer and medicinal products due to the reported cooling or painkilling properties. When menthol is added to cigarettes it can reduce the harshness of smoking by masking the taste or odor of tobacco smoke and enhancing the tobacco flavor.

Beyond enhancing the flavor of the cigarette, menthol can facilitate smoking initiation, deepen addiction and can make it more difficult for someone to end their dependence on nicotine.

Flavored cigarettes were quite popular among Hoosier high school youth with nearly half (46%) of high school students who reported smoking usually smoked menthol cigarettes.

46% of Hoosier high school youth that smoke, usually smoke **menthol cigarettes.**



Other Combustible Tobacco Use

Other combustible tobacco, such as cigars, cigarillos, hookahs, and pipes, pose many of the same health risks as cigarettes. Nationally, in 2022, cigars including little cigars or cigarillos were used at rates similar to traditional cigarettes, this is similar to what we saw in Indiana in 2022. Additionally, use of any combustible tobacco use remains high, 5.2% among high school students in the US which is again similar to what we saw in Indiana in 2022 (3.5%). Many of these other combustible tobacco products are also available in flavors (cigars/cigarillos/hookah) which are intended to make tobacco products more appealing to youth.

What Can You Do?

Due to the tailored marketing of the tobacco industry, thousands of Hoosier youth continue to smoke cigarettes and other combustible tobacco products. Reducing youth smoking will require sustained efforts including:



Promoting **tobacco-free environments** including public spaces



Providing evidence-based assistance for youth to quit commercial tobacco, such as the **Indiana Tobacco Quitline**. **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or **QuitNowIndiana.com**



Encouraging youth to join Indiana's youth empowerment initiative, VOICE, which promotes and celebrates tobacco-free lifestyles. **VOICEIndiana.org**